

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received FEB 10 1986
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Reliance Historic District

and/or common Same

2. Location

street & number In an irregular pattern along Highway 30 and
Power House Road N/A not for publication

city, town Reliance N/A vicinity of

state Tennessee code 047 county Polk code 139

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership -- see continuation sheet

street & number N/A

city, town N/A N/A vicinity of state N/A

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Polk County Courthouse

street & number Court Square

city, town Benton state Tennessee 37369

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

See continuation sheet

title Polk County Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Tennessee Historical Commission

city, town Nashville state Tennessee

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Reliance Historic District is comprised of five principal buildings, one structure, and several outbuildings which form the central portion of the community of Reliance in north central Polk County, Tennessee. The historic resources in the district are representative of vernacular design found in a small village that served as a social and commercial center for surrounding farmsteads during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in southeastern Tennessee. Constructed between 1888 and 1912, the contributing resources in the district collectively represent the historic character of the area.

The irregularly-shaped district is located along both sides of the upper Hiwassee River in the rugged mountains of the Cherokee National Forest. State Highway 30 extends through the district in a roughly east-west direction on the south side of (and is parallel to) the river. From the south side of the river, the New Reliance Road extends north over the Reliance Bridge, while the railroad tracks and a modern railroad bridge traverse the eastern section of the district. Power House Road, located on the north side of the Hiwassee River, intersects with the New Reliance Road near the Reliance Bridge. The landscape ranges from relatively flat open spaces near the river to the heavily-forested slopes of the mountains. All of the properties are located close to roads and have small front yards. Formal landscaping is minimal with only the Vaughn-Webb House having shrubbery and a fenced-in yard.

The earliest principal resource in the district, the circa 1888 Vaughn-Webb House, is also the most ornately detailed with sawn wood trim. The most recently constructed contributing resource in the district is the 1912 Reliance Bridge, although the Watchman's House was altered in 1946 and the Webb Brothers' Store (non-contributing) was built in 1955. The two residences, hotel, and church are all similar in scale and material, most being one or two story frame buildings of vernacular design with minimal ornamentation. The two largest buildings, the Higdon Hotel and the Vaughn-Webb House, have sawn wood porches and gable trim, while the Hiwassee Union Church/Masonic Hall and Watchman's House are without ornamentation. Only three outbuildings, the Vaughn-Webb barn, corn crib, and smokehouse, are of an age and scale to be contributing resources in the district. Several sheds are scattered throughout the district, but their small scale is such that they neither detract nor add to the significance of the area.

The district contains four contributing buildings, one contributing structure, three contributing outbuildings, and one non-contributing building. Contributing resources (C) are significant in the historic and architectural development of the district, possess compatible design elements, and maintain the scale, use, and texture of the district. Non-contributing resources (NC) may disrupt the texture of the district, have little or no architectural significance, or have been considerably altered.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates ca. 1888 - 1936 **Builder/Architect** Multiple

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Reliance Historic District is being nominated under National Register criteria A and C for its local architectural and historical significance. The resources in the district are historically significant as an excellent representation of a late nineteenth/early twentieth century rural community in north central Polk County, Tennessee. In the late nineteenth century, the arrival of the railroad and river ferry and the location of nearby logging camps helped Reliance develop into a small commercial and social center for the surrounding area. By the early twentieth century, a bridge would replace the ferry as the main form of transportation across the river. Although no historic store buildings are extant, a community building, an early resident's farm, two buildings associated with the railroad, and a bridge combine to form the historic district of Reliance. Architecturally, the district is important as a good example of late nineteenth century vernacular architecture. All of the historic buildings are of the same material and scale, while the Vaughn-Webb House and Higdon Hotel display interesting sawn wood ornamentation. The Reliance Bridge is a good local example of a through Pratt bridge. Overall, the Reliance Historic District retains its historic and architectural integrity.

The district is located in the fertile valley of the Hiwassee River. The area attracted white settlers shortly after the general Cherokee removal in 1838. Early settlers relied on farming and timber as their primary sources of income with the main crops being corn and hay. Pine, oak and chestnut were historically the major trees cut for timber.

The earliest known settlers of record were T. A. Toomey and D. A. Haskins who established farms south of the river. Elisha Dodson filed for eighty acres of land with the Ocoee District Land Office on April 5, 1842 and received title on August 24, 1849. He subsequently purchased most of Toomey's holdings, including a water-powered grist mill and saw mill (non-extant) located near the present Reliance Bridge. This mill, commonly called Dodson's Mill, ground grain for farmers in the surrounding area and turned freshly-cut logs into lumber for sale or construction. In filling this need, it became the center of what would become Reliance.

In other parts of Polk County there were sporadic instances of partisan violence during the Civil War, but the Hiwassee Valley among the mountains was relatively untouched. Around 1870, the area around Dodson's mill was known as Broad Shoals and there was a short-lived Broad Shoals Post Office. A postal document filed by Postmaster Y. D. M. Prince on February 10, 1881 indicated that the community had a population, including surrounding farm families, of about 400 persons. Major families in the outlying area included the Presswood, Haskins, Stephens, Lindner, Carney, Massingill, Cheek, Jenkins, Bates, and Boring families.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Hiwassee Union Church records, Reliance, Tennessee.
Linder, Fred. Personal papers. Reliance, Tennessee.
Polk County. Various County records. County Courthouse. Benton, Tennessee.
Webb, Harold, Jr. Personal papers. Reliance, Tennessee.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approximately 46 acres

Quadrangle name McFarland and Oswald Dome, Tennessee

Quadrangle scale 1 : 24,000

UTM References

A	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u> <u>0</u>	B	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>3</u> <u>0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>4</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>	D	<u>1</u> <u>6</u>	<u>7</u> <u>2</u> <u>6</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>8</u> <u>5</u> <u>0</u>
E	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

state N/A code N/A county N/A code N/A

11. Form Prepared By

name/title E. Raymond Evans and Vicky Karhu

organization Association for Preservation of Cultural and Natural Resources

date October 30, 1985

street & number Post Office Box 15863

telephone 615/875-9687

city or town Chattanooga

state Tennessee 37415

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state X local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

Deputy

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Richard L. Hagen

title Executive Director, Tennessee Historical Commission

date 2/5/86

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Joyce M. McPherson
for
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the
National Register

date 3/13/86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Reliance Historic District Item number 4

Page 2

OWNER

Ruth Stillwell
General Delivery
Benton, Tennessee 37307

James Garren
General Delivery
Delano, Tennessee 37235

Harold Webb, Jr.,
Oliver Webb,
Estate of Harold Webb, Sr.
General Delivery
Reliance, Tennessee 37309

Tennessee Department of Transportation
James K. Polk Building
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

PROPERTY

Watchman's House
Power House Road

Higdon Hotel
Power House Road

Vaughn-Webb House
Webb Brothers' Store
Hiwassee Union Church/Masonic Hall
Highway 30

Reliance Bridge
over Hiwassee River

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Continuation sheet Reliance Historic District Item number 6 Page 2

Representation in Existing Surveys

The Reliance Bridge over the Hiwassee River was included in a Tennessee Department of Transportation bridge survey conducted in 1983.

Depository for survey records: Tennessee Department of Transportation, Nashville, Tennessee.

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Continuation sheet Reliance Historic District Item number 10

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GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

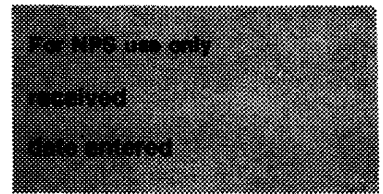
Verbal Boundary Description and Justification:

The nominated property is irregular in shape and approximately 46 acres in size. The boundary is as follows:

beginning at a point where the Reliance Bridge intersects the south bank of the Hiwassee River, the boundary moves along the riverbank in a northwesterly direction approximately 1900', thence southwesterly approximately 600', thence southeasterly approximately 400', thence northeasterly approximately 300' to the north side of Highway 30; the boundary continues in a southeasterly direction along the north side of the road approximately 2800', thence north approximately 250' to the south side of the Hiwassee River, thence north-easterly approximately 1250' to the north side of Power House Road, thence easterly approx-imately 500', thence north approximately 400', thence northwesterly approximately 1450' to the east side of the New Reliance (to Springtown) Road; the boundary continues south-westerly along the east side of the road approximately 300' until it intersects with the Reliance Bridge; the boundary then moves southwesterly along the west side of the bridge approximately 1100' to the point of the beginning (see tax map). This includes enough land to protect the historical setting and architectural integrity of the Reliance Historic District.

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Continuation sheet Reliance Historic District Item number 7 Page 2

DESCRIPTION

INVENTORY

1. Vaughn-Webb House. ca. 1888, Highway 30, two stories, weatherboarded frame, 3 bay facade, one story side extension, standing seam metal side gable roof with pedimented gables, rectangular plan, 6/6 double hung sash windows, two interior chimneys; two story, one bay front porch with sawn wood bargeboard, horizontal cornice, and balustrade; porches at side extension and rear of house, main entry has transom and glass and paneled sidelights; central hall plan with kitchen and dining room in rear extension, interior has paneled doors with architrave trim, single run stairway (C). Front of property surrounded by metal fence.

Smokehouse. ca. 1888, located south of house, one story, weatherboarded frame, metal front gable roof, exposed rafters, rectangular plan, stone foundation, single entry, two window openings on eastern elevation. (C)

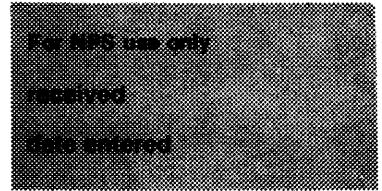
Corn Crib. ca. 1888, (may pre-date this), located northeast of house across Highway 30, frame, one story, shed roof. (C)

Barn. ca. 1910s, located northeast of house across Highway 30, one and one-half stories, frame with vertical board siding, metal gable roof, rectangular plan, one story extension with shed roof, central passage with four cribs on each side.(C)

2. Webb Brothers' Store. 1955, Highway 30, one story, frame, flat roof, rectangular plan, large display windows, rear extends on piers over hillside; used as a general store, library, gas station, post office. (NC) Small shed on property.
3. Hiwassee Union Church/Masonic Hall. ca. 1899, Highway 30, two stories, weatherboarded frame, rectangular plan, 3 bay facade, standing seam metal front gable roof, 2/2 double hung sash windows with cornice lintels, pilaster cornerboards, louvered belfry with sawn wood trim, recessed front entry, stone pier foundation; originally, second story extended over entry, but ca. 1927 the first story was enclosed for classrooms, creating the recessed entry. (C)
4. Higdon Hotel. ca. 1890, Power House Road, two stories, weatherboarded frame, rectangular plan, standing seam metal side gable roof with small bargeboard and imbricated wood trim in gable end, one exterior end chimney, two interior chimneys; full two story front porch with chamfered columns, ornamental spandrels, and sawn balustrade (much of balustrade is missing); 2/2 double hung sash windows, transoms over doors, one story shed roof rear porch, presently used as a residence. (C) Small shed on property.

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Continuation sheet Reliance Historic District Item number 7 Page 3

5. Watchman's House. ca. 1891, Power House Road, two stories with one story extension, L-shaped plan, weatherboarded frame, exposed basement at rear has stone piers and board and batten siding , 3/1 double hung sash windows, two front entries, interior chimney; altered ca. 1946 when windows changed, basement enclosed and interior stairway altered. (C) Small shed on property.

6. Reliance Bridge. 1912, over Hiwassee River, built by Roanoke Bridge Company, five through Pratt steel truss spans. (C)

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Continuation sheet Reliance Historic District Item number 8

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Around 1880, Joseph Dallas Vaughn, a prosperous farmer from McMinn County, purchased Dodson's Mill. On October 11, 1880, he purchased 380 acres from D. A. and Ann Haskins, and on November 9, 1885, he bought 280 acres from Joseph and Mary Runion. These purchases combined gave him the largest and most productive farm in the area. Using lumber sawn from trees cut on the property Vaughn built a large two story frame house with a central hall flanked by two large rooms and a kitchen on the back. Constructed in the late 1880s, the house replaced Dodson's log house. In addition to operating the mill, the Vaughn family grew corn and hay, raised cattle, hogs, and mules, and cut timber.

Reliance was located along a mail route from Cog Hill to Slyco and area mail was left with Sarah Reed Vaughn, the wife of Joseph D. Vaughn (The old wooden bureau used to sort the mail is still in the Vaughn-Webb House.). Family history credits Sarah, the "keeper of the mail" in the community, with providing the name Reliance. The Vaughns had seven children, including a daughter, Alice, who married into the Webb family. By the time Joseph D. Vaughn's son, Joseph Thomas Vaughn, inherited the farm, it had increased to 690 acres in size.

Construction of the Vaughn house was rapidly followed by another event that had a dramatic impact on the area. On May 12, 1888, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad purchased right-of-way for track construction between Etowah and Ducktown with the route crossing the Hiwassee River a short distance above the Dodson Mill. Construction was scheduled to begin within eighteen months with the entire line to be completed within thirty-six months. Aware of the potential of the situation, Calvin Higdon purchased land on the north side of the river adjacent to the railroad property and built a large two story frame hotel with a two story front porch. The Higdon Hotel not only provided accommodations for railroad personnel and travelers, but was the home of the Higdon family. At first the railroad called the area Higdon's Station, although the post office used the name Reliance. A small depot was built and soon replaced with a box car depot located near the hotel. In around 1891 a frame cottage was constructed near the depot for use by the railroad watchman (Mr. Pickle). Higdon also operated a ferry service across the Hiwassee.

Around 1899, a community building was raised in Reliance through the joint efforts of the Hiwassee Union Church and the local Masonic Lodge. This was a two story frame building with a full porch across the front. The upper floor was restricted to the use of the Masons with the church meeting on the first floor. During the week, the church was also used as a school for local children. In 1927, the church expanded by enclosing part of the front porch. This left a narrow entrance hall with small meeting rooms on either side.

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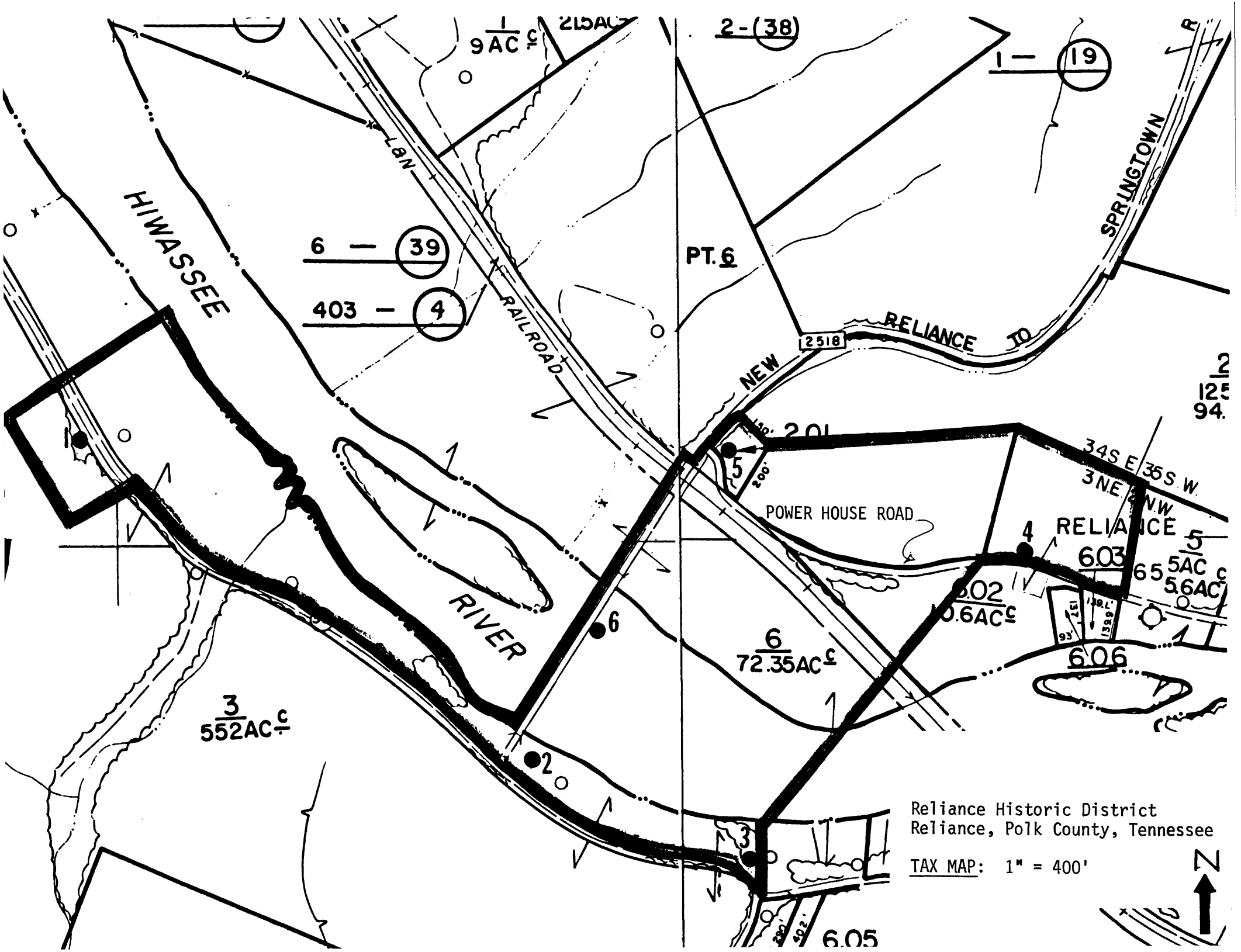
Continuation sheet Reliance Historic District Item number 8 Page 3

During the first decade of the present century the dense forests on the mountain slopes around Reliance, long a source of lumber for local residents, attracted the attention of large timber companies. The Pendergast Lumber Company built a logging camp called Probst about a mile up river from Reliance. For a brief time, Probst was an extremely active site. There was a large company commissary, an office building, a spacious house for the director of the operation and quarters for the workers who cut the trees. At its peak, there were more than twenty-five buildings in Probst. The proximity of the camp to Reliance increased local traffic, while several families of the workers lived as tenants on the Vaughn-Webb farm. Over the years, several store sites were operated by various tenants on the Vaughn-Webb farm.

During this era, the Higdon Hotel operated for a time as a summer resort, and numerous visitors enjoyed the rugged beauty of the mountains and the sparkling rush of the Hiwassee River. In 1912, a five span Pratt bridge was built over the river in Reliance. W. A. Vaughn, the son of Joseph Vaughn, was on the bridge building committee. Around this time, a special Fourth of July celebration in Reliance drew an estimated ten thousand people into the area.

Between 1915 and 1930 there were several changes in Reliance. The mill burned in 1915, although it was rebuilt and continued to operate into the 1940s. The school moved to a new building. Much of the timber supply was exhausted and the Probst camp closed. Pendergast Lumber Company sold their property to Mr. Stillwell, a resident of Reliance who worked for the railroad. With increasing use of automobiles, fewer passenger trains stopped in Reliance and the hotel ceased to operate in around 1920.

The grandsons of Joseph and Sarah Vaughn continued to operate a grist mill in Reliance. They also opened Webb Brothers' Store on May 15, 1936. The store served as a general store, post office, gas station, and library. Still in existence, it is now housed in a 1955 building. The mill was demolished in the 1950s while both the Church and Masons ceased using the circa 1899 building in the 1960s. It is now used as a storage building on the Vaughn-Webb farm. In 1969, a white-water rafting service was begun by the Webb family. Rafting is now a popular summer tourist attraction in Reliance. The Reliance Historic District contains all known extant historic properties associated with the development of Reliance. As such, it represents a significant and distinguishable entity which conveys a sense of time and place.



2-(38)

19

6 - 39

403 - 4

PT. 6

2518

12 1/2
94.

34 S E 35 S W
3 N E 2 N W

POWER HOUSE ROAD

RELIANCE

60.6 AC ±
65.5 AC ±
5.6 AC ±

60.2
60.6 AC ±

6.06

3
552 AC ±

6
72.35 AC ±

Reliance Historic District
Reliance, Polk County, Tennessee

TAX MAP: 1" = 400'



6.05